

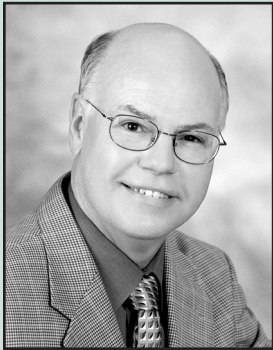


Clark County Development News

Clark County Community Development

2007 Third Quarter

Guest contributor



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Every conversation shouldn't start with a "No"

Great customer service and a "We're all in this together" attitude essential.

We have all been watching, with concern, the statistics on home sales and the slow down in residential construction. The commercial market has remained stable, especially for owner occupied buildings.

The good news is that the key economic indicators in the Pacific Northwest are all as they should be. Businesses are profitable and stable. Unemployment is down. What is happening is more of a "healthy correction" than the end of the world.

What these slowdowns should remind us of is that the public sector, which approves building permits, and the private sector, which designs, finances and constructs projects, are inextricably linked together.

I am constantly looking for better ways to communicate to potential clients just how much focused effort and energy it takes to get even the simplest project underway. In the commercial construction industry, every conversation seems to start with a "no."

"No, you can't have more than one curb cut. No, you can't make that change without a post decision review. No, that site plan doesn't meet the intent of our design standards. No, the property cannot be developed without paying for a new traffic signal. No, we can't finance that much of the project. No, you can't get tenants to pay rents that high. No, we can't get the construction done that quickly due to winter weather." Well, you get the idea.

Then I saw this quote from writer Max Lucado: "Constructing something engages only the hands, while creating something engages the heart and soul."

There it is, in one sentence, the essence of what it takes to design, permit and construct really great projects. Everyone involved in a project, both the private sector and the public sector, must focus on the building owner, who is the customer. Great customer service means starting every conversation with a "Yes we can help you!" Perhaps codes, or financials, or winter weather don't allow us to solve the problem exactly how the customer wants, but we MUST be committed to solving their problem, not just putting more obstacles and questions in their path.

A huge cost of any construction project is simply, time. One obvious component is the time required by the consultants to prepare the required drawings. Another not

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Hazelnut Grove Estates

Real Estate Sales Activity

The "Market Action" report from RMLS shows that at the end of the third quarter the average time a single-family dwelling is for sale in Clark County increased from 60 days in 2006 to 75 days in 2007. That's a 20 percent increase. In comparison, the average market time in the Portland metro area increased 30 percent, rising from 42 to 60 days.

During the same time period the average sales price in Clark County increased slightly, rising from \$301,300 to \$308,600. The most expensive homes were in Lake Oswego (\$465,000), West Portland (\$385,500), and Salmon Creek (\$380,300). The least expensive homes were in Central Vancouver (\$195,900).



Hazel Dell Square, Phase II
Phase I is under construction in the foreground.

In-migration

The influx of new residents to Clark County is holding steady for the third quarter. Although July and August were unremarkable, September 2007 figures show that 1,680 drivers surrendered their out-of-state licenses compared with 1,700 in September 2006. Similar to last quarter, 43 percent are former Oregonians and 17 percent are former Californians. It is interesting to note that less than one percent moved here from all of the New England states put together.



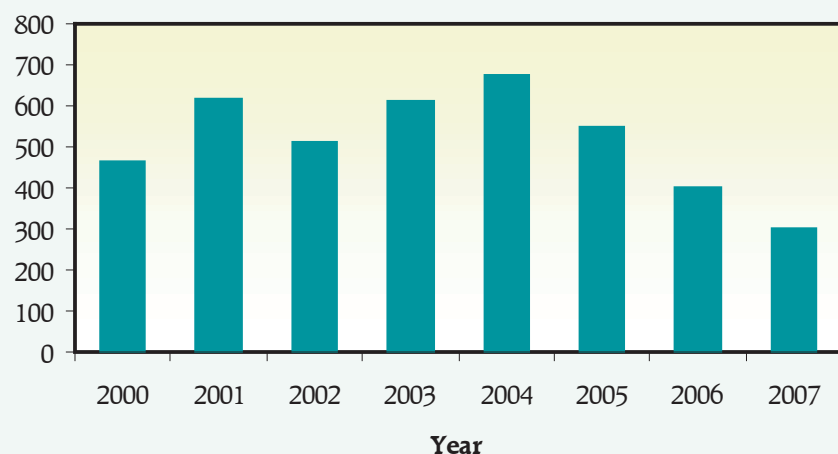
Renaissance at Salmon Creek

Development Activity

SFR

Permits for single-family residences continued to be at their lowest level since 1987 for the third quarter, totaling only 293. This is 26 percent decrease from the third quarter of 2006 when 395 permits were issued. The third quarter historical average for 2000 through 2007 is 510 permits.

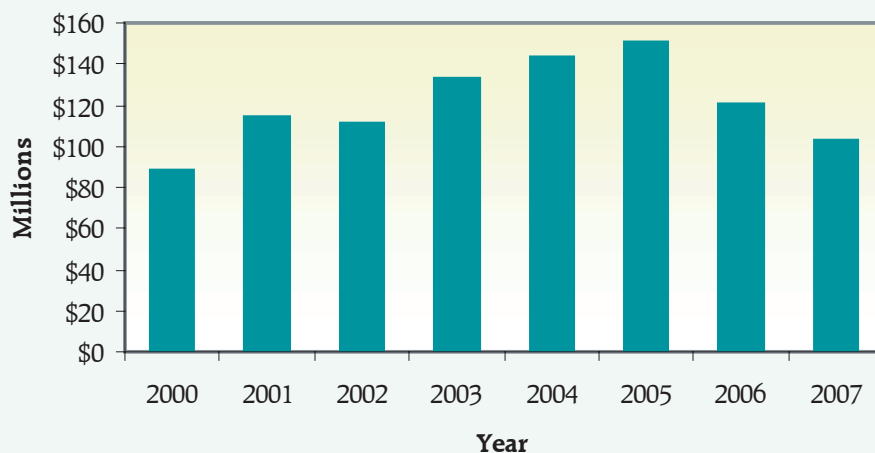
Q3 Single Family Residential Permits



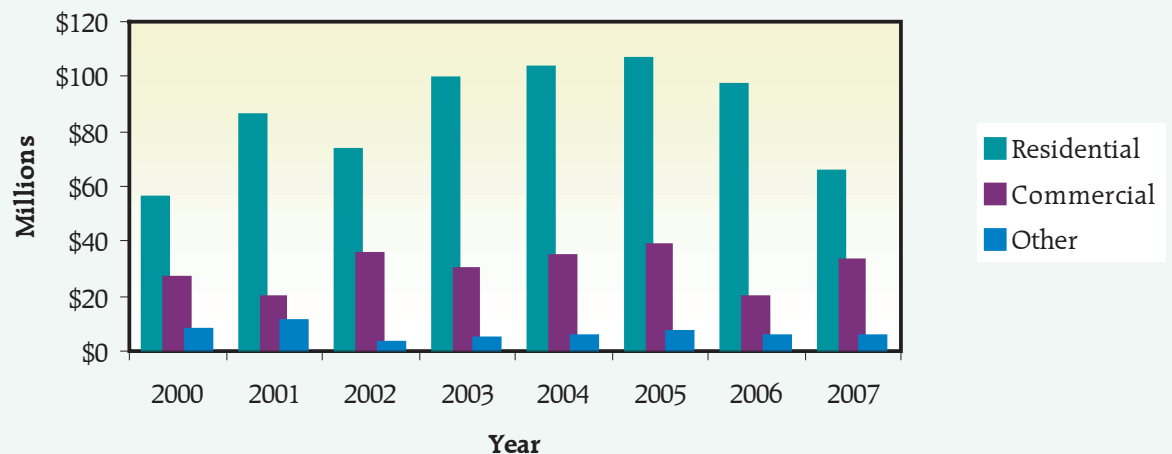
Construction Valuations

- Overall construction valuation totaled \$102 million in the third quarter of 2007. This is down 15 percent from 2006 when third quarter valuation totaled \$120 million.
- Valuation for commercial projects was \$32 million in the third quarter. This is a 68 percent increase from 2006 (\$19 million). Commercial projects represented 30 percent of the total valuation for the third quarter of 2007.
- Residential construction valuation dropped 33 percent this quarter compared to the third quarter of 2006 (\$96 million). Residential construction valuation totaled \$65 million.
- Third quarter historical construction valuation for 2000 through 2007 is \$120 million.

Q3 Construction Valuation



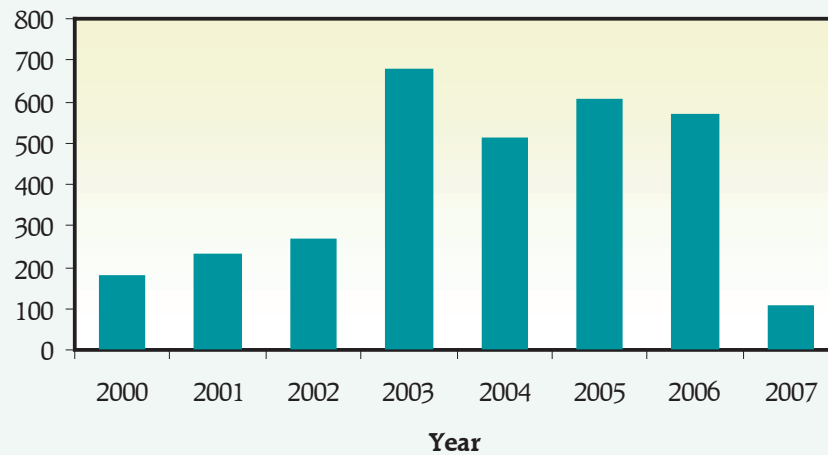
Q3 Construction Valuation Mix



Land Division Lots

- Land division lots fell 82 percent in the third quarter of 2007 compared to the third quarter of 2006 (559). Just 99 new lots were created this quarter.
- Third quarter historical average for lots created is 385.

Q3 Land Division Lots



Development Activity 2000-2007 YTD			
Year	Single Family Residence Permits	Construction Valuation (mil.)	Lots Created
2007 YTD	1024	347	1850
2006	1551	469	2535
2005	2142	583	2173
2004	2106	533	2241
2003	2157	491	1941
2002	2112	412	1558
2001	2329	417	592
2000	1825	295	972

Kohl's in Hazel Dell
Towne Center



Sampling of applications in Third Quarter 2007

Residential

- Corinna's Crest - 2 acres, 19 single-family lots (sfl)
- Deer Haven - 101 acres, 22 sfl
- Harley Meadows - 4.8 acres, 29 sfl
- Strawberry Hills 2 - 5 acres, 21 sfl

Commercial

- 88th Street Industrial Park - 18.18 acres, 14,000 square feet (sf) commercial and 138,700 sf light industrial
- Grace Ministries - 9,800 sf residential care home including a day care facility, a home schooling area, and horse riding therapy
- Hazel Dell Crossing - 3 acres, 30,000 sf commercial
- Livingston Mountain Quarry - rock crusher
- Vancouver Fire Station 810 - 3.5 acres

Other

- Shillapoo Lake Restoration - 300+ acres
- Klineline Bridge Replacement
- SR 503 Bridge at Lewisville Park Seismic Retrofit

Customer Service Grades 2007 YTD

Community Development gives customers the ability to rate their level of service during each visit. The following average grades were received in 2007.

Promptness of initial greeting.....	A-
Time spent waiting for service.....	B+
Courtesy/personal attention.....	A-
Knowledge level of employees	A-
Efficiency of service provided	A-
Usability of information	B+
Overall service	A-

Other news you can use

- [Comprehensive Plan update](#)
- [Clark County development trends](#)
- [School and Traffic Impact Fee changes](#)

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so obvious component is the time required to make follow up phone calls, to gather information, and to get questions answered, from a variety of public sector sources. Often, consultants find themselves making many phone calls between various public sector departments in an attempt to solve the public sectors own communication problems.

There is a better way. The public sector can help create better projects by simply focusing on their own internal and external communication. Every conversation should start with a "Yes, together we can solve the problem". Then, as a cohesive team, the public and private sector need to focus on Creating a wonderful project, not just Constructing something.

I sometimes reflect back on when I started in this business in 1980. Interest rates were at record highs. The construction industry died. The entire Clark County building and planning department consisted of a small handful of people.

The public and private sectors are really in the same business, the business of development. Each is dependent on the other. Together, we must focus on "Yes" and create projects that truly "Engage the heart and soul", create new jobs for our community, and make our children proud.



Orchards Village, senior living community



For an alternate format,
contact the Clark County
ADA Compliance Office.
Phone: (360) 397-2025
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Clark County Community Development

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